

HEALTH MATTERS

Beauty & Dental

INSIDE:

The Reality of Tattoo Regret

Dental Devices for Sleep Apnea
Anti-Aging Thread Lifts
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Tips for Senior Oral Care
& Much, Much More...



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Register: chomp.org/weightloss

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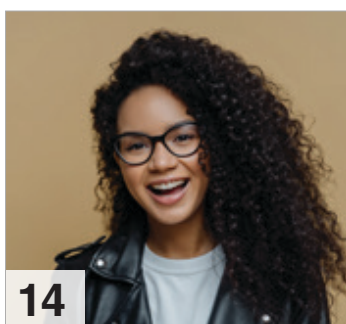
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IMPORTANT STATISTIC

Did you know?

> Only a small percentage of California adults over the age of 65—7.3 percent—have lost all their teeth due to tooth decay or gum disease. However, 25.5 percent of those 65 and older surveyed have lost six or more teeth.

Reference: Centers for Disease Control ([cdc.gov/oralhealthdata](https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealthdata))

Beauty & Dental

ISSUE

Rachel Miller, a deputy public defender in Monterey County, displays a tattoo that has been lightened through laser treatment.
Photo by Randy Tunnell



Meet Timothy

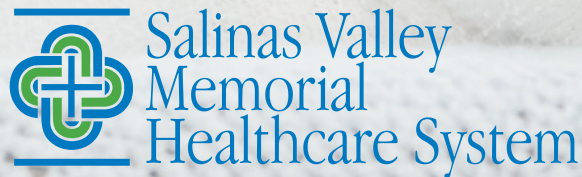
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Watch Timothy's story at svmh.com/healthmatters



COVID-19 SAFETY: All patients are carefully screened prior to being admitted to the hospital for care. In addition, we have put many other steps in place to ensure that you and your baby will be safe at all times.

Editor's Desk



Photo by Susan Gerbic

I have a strange dental anomaly—strange enough that every dental hygienist I've ever had remarks about it. "Gee, did you know you still have a baby tooth?" they say. Yes, the baby tooth is still hanging in there after all these years.

The baby tooth occupies a space that should have held an adult tooth, yet back in my formative years, no adult tooth came along to push the baby one out. About 30 years ago, my then-dentist predicted I'd lose it before I was 40. Well, it still hasn't happened.

Luckily, the tooth has good roots, and since I brush and floss and see my dentist twice a year, it is being well looked after. Of course, things happen—I've already cracked or broken several molars through normal wear and tear. There's a chance the baby tooth will come out at some point. Yet it's made it this far, so I'm feeling pretty confident that it's not going anywhere.

It just goes to show that your teeth can last a lifetime with proper care, and needless to say, I'm babying this tooth along.

Don't forget to take the simple steps that make good oral care a habit: brushing, flossing and of course, the necessary dental visits. Not only will you have a great smile to share with others, but also good oral health, which is vital to overall health and well-being.

Stay strong —

Kathryn McKenzie

HEALTH MATTERS

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THE COURAGE TO COME CLEAN

More painful than getting a tattoo is getting rid of it

The ancient art of tattooing has been practiced as a form of identity, significance, and visual expression since the start of civilization. And yet it has never been more popular than it is today.

According to the Harris Poll, more and more Americans are getting inked. About three in 10 Americans have at least one tattoo, and few stop at just one: Among those with tattoos, seven in 10 have two or more.

With tattoos on the rise, regrets have risen as well. Nearly a quarter of those with tattoos now say they wish they'd never gotten one.

The good news is, while tattoos are considered permanent, they can be removed. The bad news is that the removal process is long, arduous, painful and expensive.

Monterey County Deputy Public Defender Rachel Miller has five tattoos, each of which carries meaning and marks a significant experience in her life. She got her first ink at 22, and her most recent in 2018, a series of birds flying from the center of her collarbone to the outside of her shoulder. Yet two years later, she was ready to remove it.

"My dad passed away after a really rough illness, which was a traumatic experience for me," says Miller, 34. "The birds represent peace and my father flying away off my shoulder. But in focusing on the tattoo, I was avoiding my grief. Once I started working through that experience, I didn't want to look at the tattoo anymore."



When Miller went to a recommended place to have her tattoo removed, she was told it would take 10 sessions, with six weeks between each session, at a cost of \$400 per session. She stayed for her first session. The pain of getting a tattoo, she says, is nothing compared to getting it removed.

"Tattoo removal," says Miller, "is like getting a third-degree burn. I could smell burning flesh. That first session took so long to heal, with open wounds that had to scab over. They gave me laughing gas, but the pain lasted for a week. They put salve on the site, and lay gauze patches over the bloody wound. I remember a really dark bruise developed. The whole thing was horrific."

And Miller had nine more sessions to go to make those birds nothing more than a memory.

She then made the decision not to return for more sessions. It was not only because of the pain and discomfort of the procedure, but also because in working through her grief, she sees her faded tattoo differently and has decided to keep it as part of her personal road map. She does plan to tattoo over what remains with imagery that is more meaningful today.

"A respected friend, who has a lot more tattoos than I do, told me that tattoos are similar to scars of the experiences from our past," she says. "He would never want to remove a scar, saying our experiences have made us who we are today. Why would we want to forget that?"

Painful Process Leads to New Life Path

Aretha Rodriguez, manager of the Tattoo Removal Program of Catholic Charities, doesn't have any tattoos. But in order to know how it feels, she had a medical provider laser her skin, so she could better explain it to her clients.

Although their service is currently closed due to COVID, since 2013, this tattoo-removal program based in Santa Cruz has been helping to remove barriers to viable employment, and to broaden economic and social opportunities for individuals committed to changing the direction of their lives. With no age limit and sliding-scale fees per session, the Tattoo Removal Program is providing access to a treatment that would otherwise be out of reach for many.

"We don't say no to anybody. Individuals who receive our service must complete 20 hours of community service or volunteer work," says Rodriguez, "and have a face-to-face orientation to the program. We have 12 volunteer doctors who provide their time. The procedure is painful and long, requiring six to 15 sessions, scheduled every two months."

Both the process and the healing take time, she says, since a laser is used to break down the ink inside the body. Then, the immune system delivers it to the lymphatic system and into the liver, which removes the ink as a toxin.



"We have a lot of people who come for a few removal sessions and can't continue; it's too much," Rodriguez says. "Many have very strong stories behind having their tattoos removed, so they can be on the streets without identification and the association of what that tattoo meant. For some, it's so they can get a job. That's what keeps my clients coming. They want their lives, their bodies back. They want to feel safe, without being judged."

Comedic actor Pete Davidson 27, reportedly is in the arduous process of having his 100 tattoos removed. Apparently he'd rather lose the ink than spend hours in the cosmetics chair, having them covered for acting roles. Perhaps greater than the commitment to getting tattoos is the courage to have them removed. ■

Lisa Crawford Watson lives with her family on the Monterey Peninsula. She specializes in writing about art and architecture, health and lifestyle, and food and wine.

THE WAY TO WELLNESS

Change your habits, change your life with simple steps



Why is wellness so difficult to achieve? If we could manage obesity, Type 2 diabetes, lower our risks of heart disease, stroke, some types of cancer, macular degeneration, cataracts, cognitive decline and Alzheimer's by consuming more fresh fruits and vegetables—then why aren't we? Well, the fact is, change is hard!

Wellness is an interactive process of becoming aware of and practicing healthy choices to create a more successful and balanced lifestyle. It's the framework that you can use to organize, understand, and balance your own growth and development. It is a continuum of self-care, giving yourself permission to get off track and get back on track, and remembering to celebrate your successes along the way.

Salinas produce company D'Arrigo California has partnered with Stephanie Bouquet, a registered dietitian, certified specialist in sports dietetics, certified diabetes educator and certified wellness coach, and consulting dietician for the Hartnell College cross country teams, to share simple and holistic ways to find wellness and balance in 2021.

"We have been in the business of growing fresh fruits and vegetables under the Andy Boy label since 1923, and we want to highlight new approaches to inspire families to find balance that leads to a healthier lifestyle as we come out of a challenging 2020 year. To help us on this wellness journey, we reached out to Stephanie, CEO of SB Nutrition, as a professional in this field. Her knowledge and experience make her the perfect partner," says Claudia Pizarro-Villalobos of D'Arrigo California marketing and communications.

"As creatures of habit, we must jump in with both feet to start something new that will revolutionize our health outlook and results. It begins with simple daily practices, prepping meals ahead of time, and finding healthy recipes that inspire you in the kitchen and help you attain your wellness goals," says Bouquet.

With spring around the corner, this is a perfect time to make a fresh start by adopting new healthy habits.

CONTINUE TO PAGE 12



Claudia Pizarro-Villalobos



Stephanie Bouquet



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DAILY PRACTICES:

- **Make family cooking at home fun.** As some say, “families that cook together, stay healthy together.” Also, family cooking promotes fun family time.
- **Encourage your kids to help plan the menu.** Kids love to get involved in the kitchen (especially making a mess!) and when they are part of the prep and cooking process they are more willing to try new dishes.
- **Purchase healthy snacks to promote smart “nibbling” choices.** Stock up on plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Try to curate snacks that are high in fat, calories, and sugar.
- **Get moving.** Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day.
- **Find a workout partner.** A partner will help keep you accountable and inspired to power through workouts.
- **Stay hydrated.** Drinking water keeps you hydrated, feeling full, helps maximize physical performance and lubricates your joints, spinal cord and tissues. Health experts recommend eight 8-ounce glasses per day (8x8 rule).
- **Learn to slow down.** It takes roughly 20 minutes for the brain and stomach to talk to each other to establish fullness. If you slow your rate of eating, you might find a smaller portion goes a lot farther which also fares favorably for your waistline.
- **Get enough sleep.** Shoot for six to eight hours of sleep nightly to help regulate appetite, fullness and blood sugar levels. Try to go to sleep nightly at the same time and avoid distractions (electronic devices, caffeine, and alcohol) close to bedtime for peaceful slumber.



Trending influencer recipes featuring Andy Boy Produce:

- Broccoli Rabe Tropical Power Smoothie
- Fennel and Arugula Salad
- Instant Pot Thai Green Curry with Broccoli Rabe and Chicken
- Sweet Baby Broccoli Pho
- Romaine Heart Poke Wraps
- Beet, Fennel and Sweet Potato Crostini
- Broccoli, Pepper and Turkey Bacon Egg Bites

For these and more ideas, go to www.andyboy.com/recipes or search for Andy Boy on social media platforms.

A simple way to increase produce consumption starts with meal preparation and what you put on your plate. “Some of my favorite Andy Boy veggies are broccoli rabe, fennel and sweet baby broccoli,” says Bouquet. “If you need inspiration in the kitchen, check out the trendy and delicious recipes created by influencers that your family and friends are sure to love.”

Embracing change may not be easy, but it starts with creating a health and wellness plan that incorporates daily behaviors to help you feel refreshed, replenished, motivated and energetic.

“Start anew every day knowing that exercise, meal preparation, and a balanced diet with a high intake of produce holds tremendous health benefits,” says Bouquet. “Let’s spread health in 2021 and inspire families to increase their intake of fresh fruits and vegetables to live a more balanced life.” ■





COMMON MISPERCEPTIONS ABOUT HOSPICE

MYTH vs. FACT

The TRUTH about the Comprehensive Benefits adapted by National Hospice and Palliative Care Association.

MYTH: Hospice is a place.

FACT: Hospice is a philosophy of care and usually takes place in the comfort of your home, but can be provided in any setting in which you live, including skilled nursing homes and residential care facilities.

MYTH: Hospice is when there is no hope.

FACT: Hospice philosophy emphasizes the creative and positive outcomes to be realized by defining and achieving personal goals and by living life to the fullest. It is not uncommon for patients entering hospice to experience an improved sense of well-being and comfort.

MYTH: Hospice is for the final days of life.

FACT: Hospice is designed to meet the unique needs of terminally ill patients and their families. A patient is eligible for hospice as long as they have an illness with a prognosis of 6 months or less to live IF the disease continues its normal course. There is no absolute time limit – patients may come on and off hospice care, as needed and eligible. Most people that used hospice care wish they had us sooner.

MYTH: Hospice is just for people with cancer diagnosis.

FACT: Hospice DOES serve many patients with different diagnosis. In the past, most patients who enrolled in hospice were cancer patients. Medicare has standards to help define hospice prognostic indicators for non-cancer patients.

MYTH: Hospice is expensive care.

FACT: Hospice is a rich comprehensive benefit available for most all patients and families. Covered 100% health benefit under Medicare, Medi-Cal and most insurance plans.

MYTH: End-of-life wishes are honored.

FACT: Attempts are made to honor end of life wishes, however there is disconnect with individual wishes and actual outcome. 83% of Americans state they want to die at home but die in other places. Talk to VNA & Hospice staff about POLST and/or advanced directives.

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THE WHOLE TOOTH

Best and worst foods for your dental health

BY BARBARA INTERMILL, MS, RDN, CDE



Besides contributing to a pretty smile, healthy teeth are necessary to help us chew and swallow food. But think about this: Our teeth are also the first contact our bodies have with the nutrients we consume. In fact, says the American Dental Association, “If your nutrition is poor, the first signs show up in your mouth.”

As it turns out, the best foods for our overall health turn out to be the same foods that are best for our dental health. These are the ADA's top five foods that are good for your teeth:

- **Water**, especially fluoridated water, is the best beverage for dental health, says the ADA. Plain water helps flush food particles from the mouth, which lowers the chance for decay. Fluoride helps teeth resist attacks from acids that are the cause of cavities. Check with your water supplier to see if your water is fluoridated.
- **Dairy foods**. Milk, cheese and yogurt with no added sugar are high in protein and calcium, which can help strengthen teeth.
- **Lean meat, poultry, fish, milk and eggs** not only contain valuable protein but are rich in phosphorus, another tooth-strengthening agent.
- **Fruits and veggies** are rich in nutrients that keep our teeth and gums strong. And their high water and fiber content helps clean teeth as we chew. Chewing in turn stimulates saliva production, which washes decay producing acids away from our teeth.
- **Nuts** nourish our teeth in several ways. They contain protein and minerals that build and maintain strong teeth. They are also low in carbohydrates—sugars and starches that increase our risk for tooth decay. Chew on nuts instead of a sugary snack and fewer cavity-producing bacteria get fed.

And then there are not-so-good foods. Pay attention to how often you eat these. Dental experts have rated them the worst choices for your teeth:

Hard candy. A few treats won't harm you, but constantly exposing your teeth to high sugar foods stimulates acid-producing bacteria in your mouth that leads to tooth decay. A better alternative? Chew sugarless gum that carries the ADA Seal of Acceptance. The sweeteners in these products do not promote tooth decay.

Ice. It's for chilling, not chewing, says the ADA. Chewing on hard substances can damage your teeth's protective enamel and set you up for a dental emergency. Best to break your ice-chewing habit and enjoy water in its liquid form.

Citrus fruits. Lemons, oranges and grapefruit are extremely nutritious, yet over time, can erode away protective enamel. Take it easy with these fruits and their juices.

Coffee and tea are good for you beverages in general, but not when they are consumed with lots of sugary additions. Coffee and tea can also stain your teeth. Make sure plain water is still at the top of your beverage list.

Sticky foods are your mouth's worst nightmare, say dental experts. Dried fruit and other types of sticky food stay on your teeth longer, giving them more time to damage your pearly whites. When you do have dried fruit or trail mix, rinse your mouth with plain water afterwards. And brush and floss carefully.

Chips and other high-starch snack foods. The starch in potato or corn chips, for example, tends to get trapped in teeth and become food for hungry bacteria that cause decay. Floss your teeth carefully on days when you eat these foods. Better yet, have nuts instead.

Soda. Bacteria in the mouth feeds on sugar to make acids that attack protective tooth enamel. Even diet drinks which are free of sugar, are acidic and therefore bad for teeth, says the ADA. When you do have a soda, follow it with a glass of plain water.

Alcohol. Liquor, wine and beer can dehydrate you and dry your mouth. Heavy drinkers may experience less saliva over time which can lead to tooth decay and gum disease. Enjoy alcohol moderately or not at all.

Sports and energy drinks. Really. Sugar is the main ingredient in many of these formulas. Reserve them for prolonged vigorous activities that last more than an hour. Otherwise plain water is usually a better choice. ■

Barbara Intermill is a registered dietitian nutritionist and the author of "Quinn-Essential Nutrition: The Uncomplicated Science of Eating." Email her at barbara@quinessentialnutrition.com.

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DEFYING GRAVITY

PDO thread lifts offer a minimally invasive alternative

BY LISA CRAWFORD WATSON



Christine Melgoza

Christine Melgoza is committed to staying healthy, vital, youthful, engaged in life. Before the pandemic started, the 69-year-old mother of two and grandmother of five was going to the gym five days a week, rotating between the Stairmaster, stationary bike and treadmill, to participate in Zumba classes, and get in a little stretching and strengthening. Now, she keeps fit by taking long walks and riding her bike.

Melgoza also eats well, focuses on gratitude and connects with friends. Yet a few years ago when she looked in the mirror, she saw her appearance didn't fit the vitality she felt.

"I noticed my jowls first, and how they'd started to sag, adding years to my appearance. Then, I realized my décolletage had lost its youthful appearance. I don't think I could ever have surgery," she says, "but I wanted to do something. Gravity is definitely not in our favor."

Instead of surgery, Melgoza and her girlfriends drove in from the Central Valley to meet a friend in Monterey. While their husbands played golf, they went to Peninsula Glo Medspa to undergo a PDO thread lift.

"PDO stands for polydioxanone, an absorbable polymer used in sutures that are both flexible and durable for minimally invasive thread lifts," says nurse practitioner Stacy Rohrbough, owner of Peninsula Glo Medspa. The procedure is designed to subtly lift facial features and other areas of the body to reduce fine lines and wrinkles, while promoting collagen production to add volume to the skin.

The sutures threaded into the skin are textured with tiny barbs, she says, which enable them to pull the skin taut. The body builds collagen-rich tissue around the sutures as they are absorbed into the body and eventually eliminated.

Melgoza admits she found the procedure a little creepy in concept, but she settled in easily as Rohrbough applied numbing cream to her skin, and injected lidocaine into the thread insertion sites, complemented by nitrous oxide (laughing gas). Creepy shifted to incredulous when Melgoza compared her before-and-after pictures.

"I was floored," she says. "My décolletage and cleavage are radiant and smooth, and my jowls are so much tighter. I also was worried about pain and bruising. But there was no pain, only a little soreness in the first few days after the procedure, and absolutely no bruising."

Rohrbough supported Melgoza's décolletage outcome by adding a dermal filler, which restored fullness to the area as the thread lift smoothed the skin.

"I have been in the field of skin rejuvenation for quite a while," says Rohrbough, "and I pay close attention to what my clients need and want. I complement my procedures with neuromodulators like Botox and Dysport; with dermal fillers like Juvéderm, Restylane and Radiesse; and with radio frequency microneedling, which promotes collagen and elastin production and tightens up the skin."



Before and after PDO



Patients seeking the PDO thread lift tend to focus on the jawline, neck and décolletage, although brow-line treatments have become popular, says Rohrbough, among people who want to lift a sagging eyebrow and open up the eyes without submitting to a surgical eyelid reduction. Many patients want to rejuvenate their appearance without a lot of downtime, Rohrbough says.

Christine Melgoza has been undergoing PDO thread lifts at Peninsula Glo MedSpa for three years. She typically receives a treatment and then returns six weeks later for a touch-up of one or two threads. The results, says Rohrbough, last 9 to 15 months. Most patients return for an annual touch-up, so they don't have to start over each time.

"Paired with a healthy lifestyle, I've found the fountain of youth," Melgoza says. "Thread lifts help my appearance keep up with the rest of my vitality. I've noticed the skin on my arms is starting to look like a turkey neck, so I'm going to ask Stacy to work on that next."

PDO thread lifts can range from \$1,200 to \$3,000, depending on the areas targeted and the degree of skin laxity, Rohrbough says. Patients who have multiple areas addressed at once receive a discount.

"I have patients in their early 30s and in their 80s," she says. "We all want to look better, fresher, more youthful, good. Especially in these trying times, we can all use a lift." ■

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TECHNIQUE TRANSFER

Periodontist applies oral-surgery procedure to skin rejuvenation

BY LISA CRAWFORD WATSON



Dr. Jochen Pechak

The Perio & Implant Center, with offices in Monterey and Sunnyvale, offers a pairing of progressive technology and expertise with comprehensive care. Which is why periodontist Dr. Jochen Pechak decided to provide a minimally invasive procedure, routinely used in oral surgery, to rejuvenate the skin.

“Our area of expertise addresses the mouth and surrounding structures,” says Dr. Pechak, “which includes the lips and face—all areas that undergo aging. When patients began asking if I could apply a procedure I use to stimulate healing in the mouth following surgery, to help minimize wrinkles, I realized I could.”

Dr. Pechak is referring to a facial aesthetic procedure, platelet-rich fibrin or PRF, which uses an injectable material made from the patient’s own blood. By using this biologic agent, he says, the result is a rejuvenation of the skin, which can last up to two years.

“Everyone, it seems, is offering Botox, and you don’t have to be certified to administer it,” says Dr. Pechak. “While Botox is still a hot item, its effects are achieved by injecting poison to temporarily paralyze muscles. You minimize wrinkles, but you can’t frown or look surprised. And, it wears off in four to six months and needs to be redone.”

Dermal fillers, like Juvéderm or Restylane, says Dr. Pechak, are injected by a dermatologist or plastic surgeon, and last about a year before needing an update. They’re called fillers because they temporarily fill in wrinkles, creating a plumper appearance, which looks more youthful. Eventually, the filler is absorbed by the body, warranting replacement.

“People want something that lasts longer and is derived 100 percent from the body’s own components,” he says. “Fillers are not natural. With PRF, I inject the patient’s own tissue underneath the skin, which stimulates the formation of collagen, typically lost as we age, causing loss of volume and, thus, sagging skin and wrinkles.”

Techniques & Training

In the fall of 2019, Dr. Jochen Pechak and his wife Maya Kakis Pechak traveled to Greece to visit a colleague, Dr. Cleopatra Nacopoulos, at her clinic in Athens. Armed with a bachelor’s degree in biology and

dentistry, a master’s degree in oral biology, periodontology, and facial aesthetics, and a Ph.D and postdoctoral degree from the Laboratory for Research of the Musculoskeletal System at the Medical School of Athens University, Dr. Nacopoulos pioneered The Cleopatra Technique, which uses PRF to augment and rejuvenate the skin.

“I underwent special training in a two-day course,” says Dr. Pechak, “to learn exactly how Cleopatra performs this technique. I learned that PRF was invented as a blood concentrate by French professor Dr. Joseph Choukroun, who found that it accelerates healing. I use this procedure every day for wound healing in periodontics, and now to rejuvenate the skin.”

Here’s How it Works

Dr. Pechak begins the PRF Aesthetic Facial procedure by doing a blood draw from his patient. By spinning the blood in a special centrifuge, he separates out a platelet-rich fibrin, which is then injected, using very fine needles, into the skin.

Dr. Pechak also uses a derma roller, whose tiny spikes roll across the skin, making micro-perforations in the surface layer. The skin turns red but does not bleed, he says, and the patient feels only mild discomfort. When he rubs the PRF onto the skin, it soaks right in.

“Think of wrinkle cream they sell in the store,” he says. “Instead, I gently rough up the skin, and use the patient’s own plasma, which soaks into the deeper layers of the skin to help stimulate collagen.”

In the era of immediate gratification, says Dr. Pechak, many people opt for the quick, albeit temporary results from using Botox or fillers. With PRF, patients do see an immediate result, but it is less dramatic at the start, becoming more so as collagen forms over time.

“If you have a party in a week,” he says, “Botox or filler is what you want. If you want a more natural and longer-lasting procedure, understanding it will take a few months to get the peak of the collagen formation, PRF offers lasting gratification. The PRF procedure will take 10 to 20 years off the face, and the patient will see continued improvement over two years.” ■

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ADVICE FOR OLDER MOUTHS

Dry mouth, jaw clenching and other oral issues

BY TOM LEYDE



Dr. Arlen Lackey, right, and his staff

Aging can take a toll on one's teeth and gums. And that can lead to more and costly dental care, oral health care experts say.

Clenching and TMD (temporal mandibular disorder) teeth grinding (bruxism), dry mouth, receding gums and eating acidic foods add to mouth problems. Conditions such as diabetes, dementia, Parkinson's disease and arthritis can further complicate maintaining oral health.

Dr. Arlen Lackey has operated an adult dental practice in Pacific Grove for more than 40 years. His patients include people in their 50s, 60s and into their late 90s. He has seen and treated most, if not all, of the dental problems associated with aging and disease.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, he has noticed more problems linked to TMD in his patients. The American Dental Association's monthly journal, Dr. Lackey says, found 64 percent to 69 percent of U.S. dentists are seeing a similar increase compared to 2019. Clenching the jaw and grinding one's teeth can lead to teeth chipping, cracking or breaking.

A dentist can smooth pressure points on adult teeth to relieve some of the discomfort associated with TMD. Dentists can also fabricate night-guard appliances to wear on lower or upper jaws, preventing tooth injury and providing considerable jaw muscle relief.

Another condition that can be particularly harmful is dry mouth, which can cause the soft tissue of the mouth to become irritated. The condition may be related to certain medication side effects as well as by chemotherapy and radiation used in treating the head and neck. Emotional distress from cancer treatments or other diseases can also exacerbate the problem.

Medications such as anti-depressants, blood pressure medications, and cold and allergy medications can lead to a 5 to 10 percent decrease in saliva, Dr. Lackey says. Taking multiple doses of such medications means the dryness problem increases exponentially. Dry mouth can lead to bad breath, gum disease and cavities.

To help alleviate dry mouth, the ADA suggests chewing sugarless gum and eating sugarless candy, sucking ice cubes, sipping water while eat-

ing and avoiding or minimizing alcohol, caffeine and tobacco products.

Citric acid also can harm the teeth, Dr. Lackey points out. Years of eating oranges, grapefruit, lemons, limes and vinegar can lead to receding gums and sensitive tooth roots. Carbonated sodas, fruit juices and high sugar energy drinks also contribute to the problem of tooth sensitivity.

Receding gums cause exposure of the root of the tooth not protected by enamel. Citric acid also can expose painful nerve endings on the tooth's surface that can lead to tooth decay. To help remedy the problem, Dr. Lackey recommends regular teeth cleaning. This condition also can be made more comfortable by your dentist bonding a plastic covering over sensitive areas.

Another side of the COVID-19 pandemic associated with oral health, Dr. Lackey says, is that more people are staying home. Students are staying home from school entirely, or attending only a few days a week. Many adults are working from home. This leads to more sipping and snacking.

Meals are sometimes overlooked in favor of drinking sugary drinks and sweet foods, which can result in more tooth decay. Sugar mixed with bacteria in the mouth produces acid which attacks tooth enamel and can result in tooth decay. Once the enamel has been damaged it can't be replaced. The only remedy is seeing a dentist and having the tooth treated.

A balanced diet, regular teeth brushing and twice-a-year dental visits are recommended by the American Dental Association.

For elderly people suffering from such maladies as dementia, Parkinson's disease and arthritis flossing and brushing teeth can be difficult or even impossible. But there is help available with an electric toothbrush.

The invention of the electric toothbrush and oral irrigators have been a godsend, Dr. Lackey says. Electric toothbrushes both clean the teeth and massage the gums. He reports most of his patients are using elec-

tric toothbrushes and oral irrigators with great success in improving dental health.

“Two minutes of electric brushing can do the job of five to seven minutes of hand brushing,” Dr. Lackey says. “Many people brush less than one minute.” Some electric toothbrushes have timers to encourage best use.

Oral irrigators push water or air through the bristles of the brush as they are moving and are a boon for people who are unable to floss their teeth.

Only a few of Dr. Lackey’s patients complain about the cost of electric toothbrushes. He informs them that one dental filling is two to three times the cost of an electric toothbrush. Lackey suggests looking for the ADA-approved seal on electric toothbrushes and oral irrigators.

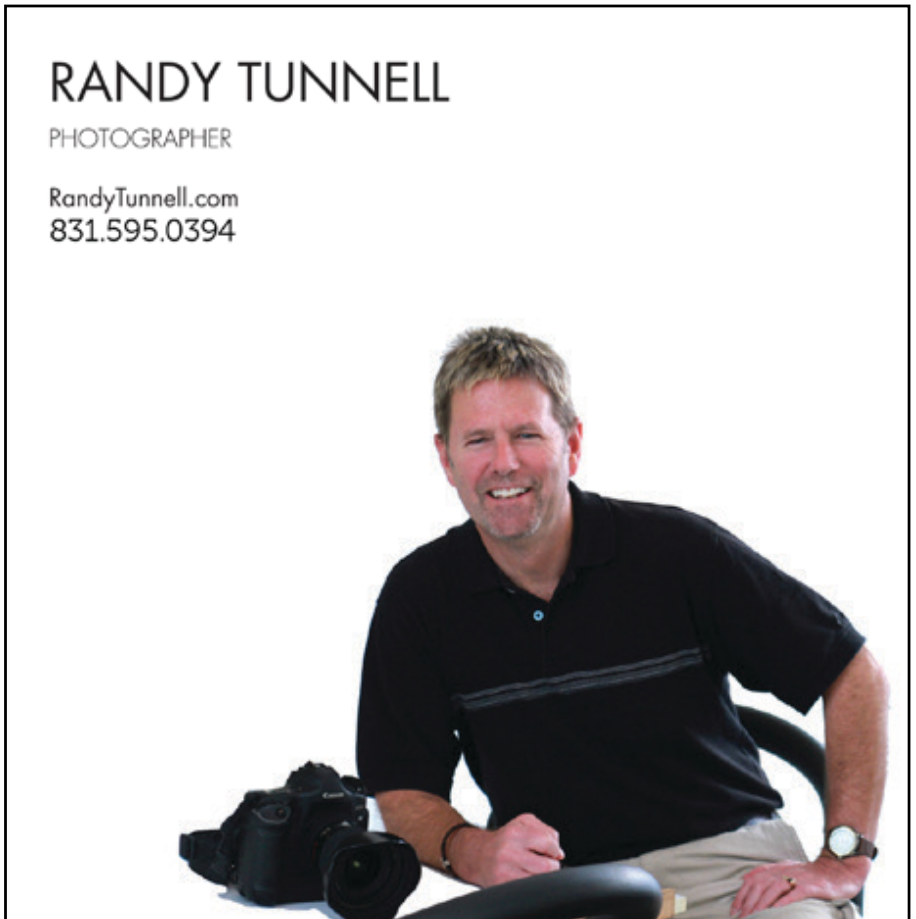
Aging is, or can be, a challenge concerning your teeth and gums. However, eating wisely, cleaning your teeth often and seeing your dentist regularly can help preserve your teeth for a lifetime. ■

Tom Leyde is a freelance writer and a veteran print journalist who lived for many years in Salinas, and now makes his home in Arizona.

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MAD ABOUT YOU

Dental devices play a role
in treating sleep apnea

For generations, dentists have looked out for the health of your teeth and gums. In the past few years, they've become an important partner in helping people get a good night's sleep.

Some dentists in Monterey County are now offering dental devices that alleviate sleep apnea, which are worn at night and help prevent this problem. The mandibular advancement devices, also known as MADs, are only available to people who can't tolerate the CPAP machine.

In people with apnea, breathing stops periodically during sleep—15 to 29 times an hour in moderate cases and 30-plus times in severe cases.

Sleep apnea impacts around 22 million Americans, according to sleepapnea.org, although many people mistake the symptoms for just being tired. Symptoms include heavy snoring, excessive sleepiness or fatigue during the day, difficulty concentrating and memory challenges. Left undiagnosed and untreated, a lack of restorative sleep can lead to serious health consequences such as heart disease, diabetes and accidents.

"There are three types of sleep apnea—obstructive, central and mixed, with obstructive being the most common by far," says Dr. Trischa Tuesta, doctor of dental medicine at Artise Dental of Monterey. She took a number of classes before offering the option to her patients.

"In obstructive apnea, you might be making an effort to breathe but have difficulty because the soft tissue in the back of the throat gets in the way. I look for signs and can tell when my patients are unusually tired, have gained weight or are grinding their teeth—all signals that point to possible sleep apnea," says Dr. Tuesta. "As dentists, we screen patients using the Epworth Sleep Scale form, we don't diagnose."

If the data indicates, she refers the patient to their doctor or a local sleep medicine center.

"A continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) device is the gold standard of care for people with sleep apnea," says Dr. Linda Martin, doctor of dental surgery with Vista Robles Dental Group in Monterey. "Patients who have been diagnosed with sleep apnea by a physician are screened for CPAP intolerance to see if a mandibular advancement device is an alternative treatment choice." There are several types of MADs used to treat sleep apnea. All devices work by moving the jaw forward to open up the airway, but do it in different ways. Some might expand the cheeks while others hold the tongue in place, for example.

The type chosen depends on the patient and whether they grind their teeth, have missing teeth or a strong gag reflex, or have TMJ disorder (temporomandibular joint syndrome).

The dental device is worn all night. In the morning, the patient uses an aligner made of material similar to a night guard, a little thicker than a whitening or Invisalign tray to put the jaw back into place and prevent the movement of teeth.

Dr. Martin started using dental devices for people with sleep apnea around 2011 when she worked at a comprehensive Native American health clinic. Inspired by that experience, she completed a residency in sleep medicine at the University of California, San Francisco Dental School in 2014.

CONTINUE TO PAGE 26



Dr. Linda Martin



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MAD ABOUT YOU

“As dentists, we know it’s important to have a sleep study. I suggest a second sleep study after the patient has worn the dental device for four to six months to see how they’re doing.”

For a dental device to be covered by insurance, the person has to be diagnosed with an intolerance to the CPAP machine. And the insurance company dictates the type of device that is covered. Some patients prefer a specific kind of device so they opt to pay for it themselves. Others may use a CPAP on a regular basis but turn to the dental device when traveling.

“The dental devices are customized to each patient,” says Dr. Tuesta. “We make an impression of the patient’s bite using a mold similar to the process used for creating a whitening tray or we can take a digital reading using a small camera. Either way, the data is conveyed to a lab that produces the actual device.”

The Panthera appliance is one that Dr. Martin likes to use. Made of a material created by NASA, it’s lightweight, yet can’t be deformed by the patient’s bite.

“Patients who’ve had clunky versions in the past really like it,” Dr. Martin says. “I recall a patient with TMJ disorder and a small lower jaw who couldn’t sleep, hated his CPAP and had tried a bulky dental device. I suggested he try the Panthera.”

“When he came back a few weeks later, he was like a different person—he looked 10 years younger, sat up straight and was more alert and perky. It’s very satisfying to see patients improve so dramatically.”

It usually takes about four to six months, with some tightening or loosening, to make sure the dentist has achieved the best fit for the patient. Often, a second sleep study is suggested after the MAD has been used for a few months to see how they’re doing.

“Every person I’ve made an appliance for has had a second study that shows improvement,” Dr. Martin says.

“In my experience, a dental device can be a life-changer for many patients,” says Dr. Tuesta. ■

Melanie Bretz lives in Monterey and has written on a wide range of topics, including health care, during a writing career spanning more than 30 years.



Dr. Trischa Tuesta



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Natividad receives award for COVID-19 response

The California Association of Public Hospitals and the California Health Care Safety Net Institute awarded Natividad the prestigious 2020 CAPH/SNI Quality Leaders Award at its 2020 Virtual Annual Conference on Dec. 4. Together, CAPH and SNI represent and provide support to California's 21 public health care systems.

In addition to the recognition ceremony video, the award includes a \$2,000 cash prize for the organization, which the hospital plans to use for community outreach.

The hospital's entry, titled "Natividad's Action Plan for Caring for Communities in Crises & Beyond: Meeting Underserved and Vulnerable Populations Where They Are During the COVID-19 Pandemic," won Special Recognition — COVID-19 Response category. This is a new category created this year to recognize systems that made outstanding contributions to their communities with their COVID-19 response.

During the COVID-19 health crisis, Natividad Medical Center focused its resources on providing education and outreach to help prevent the disease's spread in our community. Disadvantaged communities and communities of color are disproportionately affected by the disease with higher infection rates, hospitalizations and death. They also face the most barriers to receive accurate, timely information about the disease and prevention.

In February 2020, Natividad began communications efforts about the virus targeting essential agricultural workers and other high-risk populations in Monterey County. The hospital created unprecedented partnerships with the other three hospitals in the county, the Monterey County Health Department, activists, coalitions and business organizations.

Natividad's COVID-19 prevention initiatives included reallocating its marketing program to focus on the need to communicate, educate and connect with the community and better serve the hospital's patients.

Natividad Family Medicine Residency, medical staff, nursing and marketing developed a comprehensive community outreach and education program to reach people directly. Dr. Erika Romero, a resident at Natividad, went into the fields to reach people where they were.

"At the beginning of the pandemic, there was very little information available in Spanish and none in indigenous languages spoken in Latin America," Dr. Romero says. "We quickly realized the need to help educate people in their primary language and give them accurate information about COVID-19 so they could be empowered to act, receive health care and prevent the spread of the disease."

The hospital worked directly with the nonprofit Natividad Foundation to produce materials in indigenous languages, including public service announcements about COVID-19 and the shelter in place order in Spanish, Triqui, Zapoteco, Mixteco and English. The foundation also purchased 5,000 reusable masks for agricultural workers, provided interpreters for outreach and brought virtual visiting technology to patients.

Since the hospital's COVID-19 awareness initiative began in February 2020, it has touched thousands of agricultural workers and hundreds of thousands of people in Monterey County directly, plus millions more nationally through media coverage.

"The judging panel was extremely impressed by the extensive outreach and patient engagement Natividad Medical Center undertook to care for and prevent COVID-19 transmission among the most vulnerable in their community," said Giovanna Giuliani, executive director of the California Health Care Safety Net Institute. "To address the emerging pandemic, Natividad Medical Center moved quickly to cultivate innovative partnerships and developed numerous and creative ways to reach the community."

New rapid COVID-19 tests offered in Monterey

Are you about to take a trip or have surgery and need a fast and accurate test for COVID-19? ARCpoint Labs of Monterey Bay, the foremost private lab in the area offering COVID-19 testing, now has rapid PCR tests that can have reliable results back in a few hours.

"This new test combines the best of both worlds, quickness and reliability," says Spenser Smith, lab manager at ARCpoint. "If you're traveling, have a medical reason, such as surgery or need to see a family member in the hospital, or need to go back to work, we do the tests in-house and can have results back in a few hours."

These rapid tests use Mesa Biotech's advanced Accula platform to deliver rtPCR NAAT test results within hours, rather than the days or even weeks that traditional PCR testing has taken during the pandemic.

The bulk of the tests ARCPpoint does are rapid antigen tests, which are less expensive and offers same-day results for current COVID status but are less sensitive than the PCR test. The rapid test is most useful for patients who need results quickly because they are experiencing symptoms or are in high-risk situations.

ARCPpoint also offers the live virus PCR test that can have results back in two to three days. PCR tests remain the “gold standard” of COVID testing and are recommended for most general needs.

ARCPpoint also offers two kinds of “previous exposure” antibody tests for those who may have previously had the virus and recovered or were not aware they had it.

To make an appointment online to get the Rapid PCR Test, go to <https://www.arcpointlabs.com/monterey-bay/request-an-appointment/>. For information, call (831) 324-0772 or go to www.arcpointlabs.com.

Farmers’ markets serving up healthy, affordable produce



Serving communities during a more hopeful and healthful 2021, Everyone’s Harvest has embraced the central theme “New Year, New You.”

The nonprofit’s mission is to provide access to healthy, affordable fruits and vegetables through certified farmer’s markets and community food programs.

From its Fresh RX program (an innovative partnership with health-care providers that focuses on preventive health care) to Market Match (empowering low-income customers to make healthy food choices), Everyone’s Harvest focuses on diverse community needs. While some EH farmers’ markets are seasonal, these operate year-round:

- Marina Certified Farmers’ Market: Every Sunday — 10 a.m.-2 p.m., 215 Reservation Road, Marina
- Pacific Grove Certified Farmers’ Market: Every Monday — 3-7 p.m. (winter 3-6 p.m.), corner of Central and Grand avenues, Pacific Grove

For safe, quick shopping, anyone may pre-order a selection of fresh fruits and vegetables, curated by a local farmer, and pick them up at the market by visiting www.everyonesharvest.org.

Opening dates will be set soon for Alisal Certified Farmers’ Market, Natividad Certified Farmers’ Market and Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System Certified Farmers’ Market.

In another pivot due to COVID-19 restrictions, Everyone’s Harvest has announced monthly cooking demos hosted by local chefs via Zoom. Brandon Miller, former chef of Mundaka in Carmel and co-owner of Chef’s Stash, will kick off each month with a demo featuring local produce, followed by pop-up demos by other local chefs.

Balance Physical Therapy offers free 20-minute health screenings

Committed to helping its friends and neighbors improve both physical and mental health, Balance Physical Therapy and Human Performance Center is offering free 20-minute health and wellness screenings to the public at its Salinas facility.

The program is designed to help identify potential obstacles to new exercise regimens, and determine whether physical therapy may help. BPT doctors of physical therapy will help participants proceed safely to prevent injuries.

To receive a free screening, call BPT’s Salinas office at (831) 422-4782 or go to www.balancept.com/free-screening/ to access an online form.

Founded in June 2002 by Dr. John Farahmand, Balance Physical Therapy and Human Performance Center is dedicated to being the most patient-focused, result-oriented rehabilitation facility in Monterey County.

Balance Physical Therapy achieves that goal through the application of highly skilled manual therapy, prescribed therapeutic exercise and patient education, forming a team that is committed to returning patients to an active lifestyle.

BPT now has locations in Monterey, at 2260 N. Fremont St.; Salinas, 143 John St.; and Prunedale, 7760 Moro Road, Suite #G120, to better serve the community’s needs. Find out more at www.balancept.com.

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COMBAT COVID ANXIETY

Senior peer counseling available for residents 55 and older



During the COVID pandemic, older adults may be feeling lonely, hopeless and worried about the future. What's more, the social distancing measures that are necessary right now can impact one's mental health.

If you are a Monterey County senior who is feeling worried, depressed and isolated, help is only a phone call away, through the Alliance on Aging's free peer counseling service, which is available in both English and Spanish.

Senior peer counselors offer emotional support, guidance, and empathy to people over the age of 55 who may be facing fears of contracting COVID-19 or who are missing their friends and family during this challenging time. These counselors can also assist those who have experienced the death of a spouse, the stress of other illnesses, and other life transitions.

The constant news cycle about COVID-19 coupled with social distancing measures can have a real impact on a person's mental health, and anxiety or worry may arise while listening,

reading or watching the news. It's important during times like these to monitor your own physical and mental health.

Talking with someone of a similar age, with related life experiences and values, can help a person work through feelings—or make decisions—about all kinds of challenging issues.

Peer counselors can give one-on-one support by phone, and in addition, seniors with computer access can also go to the Alliance on Aging website to see a video series that give tips and strategies for dealing with isolation, anxiety, depression and more, in both English and Spanish. The videos were produced in partnership with Monterey County Department of Behavioral Health.

For more information, go to allianceonaging.org/programs or call (831) 758-4011 or (831) 655-1334. ■



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